

HESTER VAUGHAN.

Her History—The Crime for which she is Condemned—The Efforts to Secure her Pardon.

The New York World, in its yesterday morning's issue, devoted three columns and a half to detailing the history of Hester Vaughan, and the crime for which she has been sentenced to die. The article was headed:—"A movement to rescue a girl from the gallows; a story of outrage and suffering; sisterly charity in the City of Brotherly Love; woman's neglect of prison work; 20,000 petitions for a negro murderer; and none for an innocent woman!" We make the following extracts from the article in the World:—

HER STORY.

She is a little English girl, rather short and stout, with light brown hair, a pretty mouth and neat teeth, a clean and bright complexion, a fine, broad forehead, and large brown eyes—a sweet, trusting face altogether, showing her to be a woman of a kind, kind, and kind nature, who would cling to one she loved through good and evil treatment, and who would suffer and keep silence rather than let others know of her troubles. Her name is Hester Vaughan. She has been in Moyamensing Prison, in Philadelphia, for ten months, and for five of them has been under sentence of death for murder in the first degree.

"If there is anything in physiognomy or phrenology," said Mrs. Kirke, "I could not believe, even after first looking into her face, that she was guilty of the crime of which she is charged."

"I'll sail the seas over, I'll cross the wide ocean."

This is her story:— She landed in New York February 8, 1858, with her husband, John Harris, a native of Wales. He married her on the 3d of August, 1855, when she was twenty years old, in Gloucestershire, England, where she lived with her father. Her mother was dead. After being six months married she left her native place—a pleasant region known for its orchards and gardens and cornfields, near by where

"The Avon to the Severn runs, The Severn to the sea!"

and crossed the ocean for the sake of this person, who is called John Harris. She says she thought he was an honorable man and she loved him. He was a house-carpenter, and she lived with him in this country at places where he could get work, until finally, in April, 1856, they moved to Pottsville, Pa.

A DEPARTURE.

Harris had left her several times for a number of days at a time without giving very satisfactory explanation of his whereabouts, and "he began to seem very strange," she says; and she now believes that he had another wife in this country. While at Pottsville he told her that he was obliged to go to Philadelphia to buy carpenter's tools, and he left her. When he had gone she found that he had stolen her marriage certificate, and taken with him everything valuable belonging to them.

She has never seen him since.

AN OUTRAGE.

She was a handy girl about the house, and understood all the mysteries of the dairy, and to earn a support she hired herself out at Pottsville as a maid. She remained there five months, and then went to Jenkintown and lived at the house of Mr. Hewitts. She subsequently left Mr. Hewitts and went to another house as dairy-maid. There she formed the acquaintance of a man whose name nothing will persuade her to disclose, who, with force, compelled her to submit to his desires, as she protests, "once, and only once." It was in the dark. She was alone, away from everybody, and she yielded to mere physical force.

All this was told to Mrs. Kirke and Mrs. Dr. Lozier, in disconnected and incoherent conversation. She shrank a little from them at first, but when they assured her that they did not visit her from curiosity but with a desire to help her, she soon spoke with them freely, and told all her story to them in broken parts, and in answer to inquiries, while Mrs. Kirke took down the main facts in pencil. She told in her plaintive way, yet quite calmly, of leaving her father, and of her husband's desertion of her; but when she spoke of the wrong done her by the man whose name she protects she became tremulous, and finally broke down and burst into tears.

This man is the cause of her subsequent shame and misery, but with her quiet, tender, and decided refusal, and with an infinite mercy for those depending on him, she puts off all questions concerning him.

"He is married now," she says, "and she is an innocent and good woman, who is his wife, and he has a child, and there has been misery enough now, without any more coming out of it."

"Did you love him?" asked Mrs. Kirke. "No!" (quite emphatically). "But suppose, Hester," said Mrs. Kirke, "that your life or your getting out of this place should depend on your disclosing his name?"

"Well, ladies," said she, "I don't know, but I don't think I would ever tell his name."

II.

THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF HER CHILD. After three months, feeling her shame, filled with apprehension of the future, friendless and deserted, she left Jenkintown and went to Philadelphia to hide herself in the solitude of the great city. She carried a little money with her, and she hoped to save more by living frugally and working wherever she could find opportunity.

She hired a little room at No. 703 Girard avenue for \$3 a month, and lived there with only a furnace which she cooked by, a table, two chairs, and a mattress for furniture, and struggled for subsistence. There were plenty of temptations, Heaven knows, when she went out into the streets, to an easier life; and in all her trouble and struggle, with the horrid fact of her actual disgrace pressing upon her day by day more heavily, with poverty and misery around her and before her, it is a wonder that she was staunch to any good teachings of her early life. But she lived on by toil and saving, and she found out how little a woman can live on, week by week, compared with the cost of the smallest trinkets and ornaments bought every afternoon in the fine stores of Philadelphia, and compared to the smallest contribution given by brilliant audiences and devout congregations for the relief of the freedmen and for the reclaiming of the heathen. By working hard through the winter at sewing and washing, she saved up and hid away thirty dollars against her confinement.

In this little room, one cold Friday, the 8th of February, her baby was born. She was alone there, lying on her mattress, with no fire in her furnace, shivering with cold and trembling with pain and terror, and gave birth to a female child.

THREE DAYS OF AGONY.

She was in labor nearly three days, taking care of herself the best way she could, her room cold and barren, in terrible agony through the daylight and through the dark

night, sometimes unconscious, and only thus relieved from the suffering that no man can know or tell, from the strain and the tearing of her body, wishing that she might die and believing that death was coming. There was nobody to help her, or give her any ease, or hold her hands, or relieve the terrible clutch of her fingers, or relieve the fearful tension of her muscles.

In that strain and torture she says that the baby was born, only moaned a few times and did not cry, and that she became unconscious. Afterwards the child lay dead on the floor.

While she was in pain on Thursday, she says that Mrs. Keefer came to her door and asked her if she could go to market. She replied that she was dreadfully sick and could not go; and she asked the woman if she could not come in to help her. Mrs. Keefer replied that she could come in when she returned from market, but she did not make her appearance again. Nobody was with her there when the child was born, though she moaned and cried, and nobody came near her till Saturday.

If any have ever committed crime because they were drunken with anguish, or frenzied with intolerable agony, or driven out of their senses with shame and terror, and if this would be considered a mitigating circumstance to stand before a law court by the side of pleas that have been made of insanity and all sorts of manias resulting from anger or strong drink or avarice, or what not, then the Ladies' Committee think that perhaps, even if the girl had committed a crime, there would be some mitigation here.

When Hester told the story of the birth of her child to Mrs. Kirke and Mrs. Dr. Lozier, she again burst into tears, but soon checked them.

THE DEAD CHILD.

On Saturday morning she lay a little easier with her child dead on the floor, and managed to crawl to the door and call for assistance. There were two German women in the house, Mrs. Swartz and Sarah Keefer, one of whom heard her and came to her room. Hester appealed for assistance, and said she would give everything she had in the world if they would do something to relieve her. She may have asked also that something might be done with the dead baby.

The woman gave her a cup of coffee, and called in the authorities.

The Coroner's physician found marks of violence on the soft part of the child's skull, which, he said, must have been made by some blunt instrument. But no blunt instrument was found in the room. It was an eight months' child, of small vitality. The doctor says the fracture might have been made by a woman's thumb, and Mrs. Dr. Lozier and Mrs. Dr. Smith, of Philadelphia, say that that would have been an improbable cause of the child's death, done unawares by the mother, without any purpose of murder.

PROBABILITIES OF INFANTICIDE.

It seemed to the authorities, however, very probable that this young woman had committed infanticide. They perceived that she had been lying there with an illegitimate child by her, born, as she says, and as there is nothing to disprove, of a man's crime, deserted by those who should have assisted her, cast out by society from thenceforth. It was shrewdly observed, likewise, that it was a "female child"—not a boy, who might grow up and fight his way and earn something, and the authorities thought it quite likely that in her anguish she might have seen nothing particularly lovely in a woman's struggle for life, and might have thought it better that a female child die and go to a better land, or to no land at all, than to try to grow up to be virtuous and happy in the city of Philadelphia. They saw that this very wicked thought might, from her standpoint, have seemed right.

The German woman corroborated this view of the case, saying that Hester had asked her to take the child away and keep it secret. This, of course, might be compatible with the death of the child in any other way than by murder.

Hester asseverates that she said nothing to the woman which could have given them the impression that she had committed any crime; that she only asked them to help her, and said she would give anything to procure relief. These were German women with whom she had been in the habit of going to market sometimes and it was difficult for her to talk to them or for them to understand her, and if they took any different meaning from her words, she said they must have misunderstood her.

"If I was in the presence of the Great Judge, ladies," said she, "I would say just as I am saying now. I said if they would only do something to help me I would give them all I had."

THE PRISON AND THE GALLIOWS.

The authorities, perceiving a noble opportunity to vindicate the virtue of Philadelphia, held an inquest over the child and buried it, and arrested the poor girl and put her in prison. It was Saturday when she crawled to the door of her room and called for help, and it was Tuesday when they took her to a cell in Moyamensing Prison. They kept her there for five months. Then, to relieve the monotony of her life, they took her to the court-room, found her guilty of murder in the first degree, sentenced her to be hung by the neck until dead, and then put her back in prison again.

The account of her trial and the verdict in the newspapers say she "was very calm, and seemed not to appreciate her situation at all."

ALL ALONE.

For five months, from February till July, from the birth of her baby to the day of her trial, she was alone in her cell in Moyamensing Prison, and not one of the city of Philadelphia visited her. Her cell was comfortable enough for a prison cell, though almost barren of furniture, with bare floors, and only a dim light through the gratings of the window. But the horror at the mere thought of the prison and the gallows was maddening to her, and she lay or sat in her cell day and night for five months, all alone with her terror and her shame.

"I have no company," said she to Mrs. Kirke and Mrs. Lozier, "but the rats and mice."

THERE WAS NONE.

"In a whole city full!" out of the gay throng of nicely dressed ladies that went up Chestnut street every afternoon, scattering perfume where they passed, who thought for a second time of Hester Vaughan, or would have soiled their kids by touching so much as the hem of her garment. It is so easy to listen to the recital of the dreadful deeds of slave-masters, and of the cruel things done in heathen lands, and to get indignant about them, but so very disagreeable to go about in prisons.

She says the physician was very kind to her, and has no complaint to make of her treatment in prison.

CRIED DRY.

The Ladies' Committee asked her if she had suffered much mental anguish in her cell. "Yes," she said, "the first two months I cried most all the time; I cried steady most all the time. But," she continued with a mournful despair, "I don't cry much more; I can't cry much more."

Perhaps that was why she was calm at the trial. Her eyes looked a little stony as she told it, but there were tears waiting behind them. For two months she was almost overcome with the distress of her position in a felon's cell, with thieves and murderers for neighbors, with nothing by which to amuse herself, with nobody to talk to and nothing to read. She had only to think all the time of her trouble, disgrace, and danger. Her father in England might hear of it, and she dreaded that more than anything else.

OTHER RECTOR HAVE I NONE.

No woman visited her. After a while, however, some preacher left her a hymn book, and she said it was a great comfort to her, because she had so much time to read, and it was, and is, such a relief from the monotony and heartlessness of her surroundings to repeat over its sweet words. More than all she said to Mrs. Kirke and Mrs. Lozier that she liked the hymn— "Jesus, lover of my soul, Let me to thee be true, Till I shall see thee face to face, And thou wilt be to me, Jesus, lover of my soul, Let me to thee be true."

She repeats it as a prayer, rather than as a hymn, fervently to herself when she is alone— "Praise me, oh, my Savior, hide Till the storm of life is past, Let thy shield and cross be my refuge now."

It seemed to her as if some of the lines were written peculiarly for her:— "Other refuge have I none, Hangs my helpless soul on thee; Leave me, leave me not alone, Still support and comfort me! And when the darkness gathered around her, she would repeat it all down to its closing line:— "Cover my defenseless head With the shadow of Thy wing."

THE TRIAL.

After February, March, April, May, and June had passed, with snow and wind and showers and blossoms, she was brought to the Court of Oyer and Terminer, before Judges Ludlow and Brewster, for trial. The report is as follows in the next day's paper:—

In the case of Hester Vaughan, charged with the murder of her infant child, the defense offered testimony as to good character, and argued that the prisoner should not be convicted of murder in the first degree, because in the agony and pain she was suffering, she may have been bereft of all reason, and, moreover, there was a probability that the death may have been caused by accident, for the prisoner was the only human being who saw the death, and her lips were closed by the law. "On the other hand," the District Attorney urged that every circumstance indicated the woman's reason, her failure to notify any one of the child's birth, her indisposition to show it to any one, her endeavor to have the body spirited away, and to have her crime kept secret, the sharp wounds on the little child's skull—all proved it to have been a deliberate, planned murder of the infant woman with the name the law had made for it—murder in the first degree.

"Having received the charge of the court, the jury retired, and, after several hours' deliberation, rendered a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree. The prisoner was very calm, and seemed not to appreciate her situation at all."

She was convicted in this way on the most precarious kind of circumstantial evidence; and it was said by many that if she had had money to procure an able defense, or had even relied on a lawyer appointed by the court, she would very probably have been acquitted. The sentence was pronounced, but no day was set, and Hester was sent back to her cell. For five days had her sister Jennie to interfere for her, but Hester had nobody. Yet there did finally rise one woman in Philadelphia who heard of her case, and has taken a great interest in her behalf, though she has been unable to obtain any response from the people of Philadelphia to her appeals for efforts in behalf of the girl. This is Dr. Smith, a lady physician much respected and with a very wide practice, a lady with a large heart and a strong body, who has often visited Hester and brought her reading material and other things to occupy and amuse her. Dr. Smith has also interested Governor Geary in the case of the girl, so that he will be ready to listen to any appeal in her behalf. It is through her also that the girl's case is heard of now.

But no petition has been sent to Governor Geary in her behalf.

NO DISTINCTION OF COLOR.

On the next day after Hester was convicted, in the same court and before the same judges, a colored man was convicted of stabbing a married woman with whom he cohabited, with a dirk, so that she died.

While Hester Vaughan has lain untried in her cell, the names of twenty thousand respectable citizens of Philadelphia have been obtained to a petition to Governor Geary to relieve or commute the sentence of this colored man (Alfred Alexander).

AN EXAMPLE.

The committee of ladies called on Judge Ludlow, before whom Hester was convicted. He remembered the case and believed that the girl was guilty. He thought she was otherwise a good girl; had no doubt of her excellent character; on account of pity for her he had on her trial adjourned the case another day to allow her to procure witnesses who testified to her good character; he was not afraid that the girl, if liberated, would ever commit another crime; would not be afraid to have her live in the family of his best friend.

But he said that infanticide was becoming a common crime, and that this girl ought to be made an example of.

It was this which made the blood of the Ladies' Committee boil in their veins. "Generally," said one of them, "when a girl kills a child who is born out of wedlock, a man has had something to do with it. Would it not be well to make an example of a man sometimes?"

A CHANCE FOR MORE EXAMPLES. Probably the committee thought more—thought that the crimes of feticide and abortion were very prevalent, and that the germ of many a life was destroyed, not alone by poor girls, and not alone out of wedlock, but that better examples might be found perhaps among ladies who sit cozily wrapped up in elegant bonnets, with abundant money and good husbands, and who destroyed life not through shame, or poverty, or despair, but because they did not like the trouble of fulfilling the office for which nature fitted them. Besides, infanticide is only discovered on the part of poor girls who have not the means of secrecy.

NOT GUILTY.

Mrs. Kirke and Dr. Lozier obtained all the information they could of the girl's case, and sincerely believe her innocent. They believe so, also, from her own story. Dr. Smith, who has visited her at intervals since her trial, has no doubt of her innocence. The girl herself utterly and solemnly denies her guilt when questioned.

THE INTERVIEW.

The delegation from the Workingwomen's Association obtained a letter from the Attorney-General of the State, Mr. Brewster, the District Attorney, and from others, and were much assisted by Mr. Samuel S. Seward, a nephew of Secretary Seward. They therefore obtained admission, although they did

not call on visiting day. They found the prison very cleanly kept. It is in the charge of Mr. Chandler, who formerly represented our Government in Italy, and who goes about cheering the refined souls of the inmates by such remarks as "Well, how do you do this morning, Mary, my dear?"

The Sisters of Charity visit the prison at stated times, and do a great deal of good, and give much comfort to some of the prisoners. If any similar Protestant organization applied for permission to visit and assist the prisoners, very likely they might obtain the privilege. Hester is a Protestant, and all her trouble has made her, as one of the Ladies' Committee says, "a very devout little body."

Mrs. Kirke and Mrs. Dr. Lozier were the only women besides Mrs. Dr. Smith who had any interest in her case and visited her, and she was grateful for their kindness, especially when learning that they had come for this purpose from New York. Anna Dickinson attempted to visit her, but did not succeed. She was found very clean and tidy in her cell, dressed in the regulation checked gingham, with some nicknacks that Mrs. Smith had brought her, nicely arranged on her table; she had also contrived a neat curtain to cover up the bars of the window.

Mrs. Kirke and Mrs. Dr. Lozier were much affected at times during the interview, but they kept their emotions, as far as they could, subservient to their better judgment. Before they left Dr. Lozier made a most tender and beautiful appeal in prayer, and the girl was asked to join in the words, "Our Father who art in heaven," etc., which she did timorously.

A DAUGHTER'S LOVE. Her father still lives in England, at her old home, and writes her loving and fatherly letters, and has never heard of her sorrows. She has corresponded with him all along, but has never told him a word of them. The Ladies' Committee saw a kind and beautiful letter from him, full of good advice to her, to continue in the ways that are ways of pleasantness and in the paths that are peace.

"Oh! ladies," she said, "I would do anything. I would be willing to suffer almost anything in the world if I could never let him know that I had been in prison."

Again, when they were leaving her she said:— "I am very thankful for all that has been done for me in getting people to help me; but, oh! ladies, I wish my name could be kept from getting abroad, for I don't want my father to hear it. I know it would kill him if he knew it."

When they left she again thanked them for their kindness; "but," she said, "I must trust in God."

SPECIAL NOTICES.

IMPORTANT STATEMENT.—JUSTICE to my many friends and patrons in Philadelphia demands that I should thus publicly state that I am not any longer connected with the Colton Dental Association of this city, as their operator, but am now operating in my own office, where I continue to make extracting teeth without pain, by means of the new and improved method, and devoting my entire particular branch. The following eminent gentlemen in the dental profession send their names of extracting teeth to me: Dr. J. D. White, Dr. Daniel Neale, Dr. David Roberts, Dr. Malin Kirke, Dr. J. C. Williams, Dr. J. C. & E. E. Hopkins, Dr. H. Winterbottom, Dr. Edw. Townsend, Dr. H. E. Reinsteim, and many others. Respectfully, Dr. P. R. THOMAS, Office, No. 107 WALNUT STREET.

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NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS.

The Board of Directors have this day declared a Semi-Annual Dividend of FIVE PER CENT. on the capital stock of the Company, to be paid on or after November 30, 1868. Blank Powers of Attorney for collecting Dividends can be obtained at the Office of the Company, No. 235 S. 11th Street.

The Office will be opened at 8 A. M. and closed at 4 P. M. on Nov. 30, 1868, for the payment of Dividends, and after that date from 9 A. M. to 3 P. M.

THOMAS T. FIRTH, Treasurer.

GRAND ORGAN AND VOCAL CONCERT.

TO BE GIVEN IN THE FIRST INDEPENDENT CHURCH, BROAD AND 5th STS. (Rev. John Chamberlain, Pastor.) ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1868, at 8 o'clock, for the benefit of the NATIONAL PRINCE OF PEACE SOCIETY. The following artists have volunteered: Messrs J. B. WOOD, H. G. THUNDER, J. PRINCE, A. R. TAYLOR, and the "MARTIN LUTHER" SOCIETY. Tickets one dollar, for 50c by Trumper, No. 925 Chestnut street; Andre, No. 114 Chestnut street; Honer, No. 102 Chestnut street; and at the office of the National Prince of Peace Society, No. 102 Chestnut street, and by H. L. Hall, No. 224 North Twenty-first street.

LECTURE.

BY REV. WILLIAM B. CULLISS, (subject—"OUR YOUNG MEN.") IN CONCERT HALL, THURSDAY EVENING NEXT, December 3, at 8 o'clock.

Tickets, 25 cents; Reserved Seats, 50 cents. To be had at Gould's music store, No. 925 Chestnut street, and at the Rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association. 110 mwalst

NOTICE.—THE ANNUAL MEETING of the Stockholders of the D. & L. L. F. TROUBLE COMPANY will be held at the office of the Company, No. 218 WALNUT STREET, on THURSDAY, December 3, at 10 o'clock M.

EDWARD P. HALL, Secretary. Philadelphia, Nov. 18, 1868. 115 mwalst

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